

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 0550

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MILI, OVIP, NP
SUBJECT: CINCPAC VISIT TO NEPAL

1. ADMIRAL MAURICE F. WEISNER, CINCPAC, AND PARTY VISITED KATHMANDU JANUARY 26-28. THE ADMIRAL MADE COURTESY CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER BISTA, FOREIGN MINISTER ARYAL, AND ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL GUNA S.J.B. RANA. HE INFORMALLY MET OTHER HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS AND DEFENSE OFFICIALS AT RECEPTIONS HOSTED BY GENERAL GUNA AND DATT COL. FARR, AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING FOREIGN SECRETARY BHATT, AT A DINNER GIVEN BY THE CHARGE.

2. IN HIS SCHEDULED MEETINGS WITH NEPALESE OFFICIALS MENTIONED ABOVE, ADMIRAL WEISNER EXPLAINED CINCPAC'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND HIS INTEREST IN VISITING SOUTH ASIA TO FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF WITH THIS PART OF THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES. FOREIGN MINISTER ARYAL ASKED THE ADMIRAL FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF SOUTH KOREO'S ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF
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AGAINST NORTH KOREA FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. GROUND FORCES, REFLECTING THE CONCERN WHICH HE HAS PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED TO US PRIVATELY ON THIS SITUATION, AND THE ADMIRAL ASSURED HIM OF THE CONTINUING U.S. COMMITMENT TO SOUTH KOREA'S DEFENSE. HE ALSO ASKED THE ADMIRAL FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF WHAT RELATIONSHIPS WOULD EMERGE AMONG LAOS, CAMBODIA, AND VIETNAM. PRIME MINISTER

BISTA RAISED THE QUESTION OF GROWING SOVIET NAVAL POWER, ASKING WITH HOW MUCH CONCERN THE U.S. VIEWED THIS, BUT DID NOT ALLUDE TO THE INDIAN OCEAN NOR TO U.S. INDIAN OCEAN FACILITIES. BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED PLEASURE OVER ADMIRAL WEISNER'S VISIT.

3. DURING CINCPAC'S VISIT TO THE ROYAL NEPAL ARMY (RNA) HEADQUARTERS, BRIEF OPEN DISCUSSIONS WERE HEIC BETWEEN THE ADMIRAL AND GENERAL GUNA AND THEIR RESPECTIVE STAFFS. TOPICS INCLUDED GENERAL GUNA'S RECENT OFFICIAL VISIT TO INDIA; THE VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT PROGRAMS OF THE U.S. AND NEPAL AND NEPAL'S PROVIDING VOLUNTEERS FOR THE GURKHA UNITS OF INDIA AND GREAT BRITAIN; THE ROLES OF THE RNA AND NATIONAL POLICE IN THE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL SECURITY; AND THE USE OF ANIMAL TRANSPORT UNITS IN NEPAL. GENERAL GUNA EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATE FOR CINCPAC COMING TO VISIT HIS COUNTRY. (NOTE: THIS WAS THE FIRST HIGH LEVEL U.S. MILITARY OFFICIAL TO VISIT NEPAL SINCE 1970).

4. IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE ADMIRAL AND GENERAL GACA, GUNA NOTED THAT U.S. GRANT COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES EARLIER PROVIDED WERE NOW BECOMING OLD AND THAT PROCUREMENT OF SPARE PARTS WAS A PROBLEM, GIVEN THE NEPALESE ARMY'S SMALL BUDGET. ADMIRAL WEISNER EXPLAINED THAT THE U.S. WAS NO LONGER ABLE TO OFFER SUCH EQUIPMENT OR SPARE PARTS ON A GRANT BASIS. GUNA
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STOPPED SHORT OF MAKING A REQUEST FOR NEW EQUIPMENT, THOUGH IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH THE CHARGE HE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN EXPLORING WHETHER "SOFT LOANS" MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FOR THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS. GENERAL GUNA EXPRESSED TO THE ADMIRAL HIS CURRENT SATISFACTION ABOUT THE GRANT AID TRAINING PROGRAM BEING FURNISHED TO NEPAL BY THE U.S.

5. THE VISIT WAS PLAYED LOW-KEY AND DID NOT ATTRACT MUCH ATTENTION. THE OFFICIAL DAILY NEWSPAPERS CARRIED A STORY ABOUT THE VISIT THE DAY BEFORE THE PARTY ARRIVED, AND NOTED BRIEFLY, WITH A PICTURE OF THE TWO, THAT THE ADMIRAL HAD CALLED ON THE PRIME MINISTER. WE DID NOT ISSUE A PRESS RELEASE ON THE VISIT. ADMIRAL WEISNER AND HIS PARTY WERE WELL-RECEIVED BY THE NEPALESE OFFICIALS WHOM THEY MET. APART FROM GENERAL GUNA'S PERENNIAL HOPE FOR SOME ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS, THERE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY EXPECTATIONS FROM THE VISIT.
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